



# GROUND COVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

NOVEMBER 2010

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**\$1**

Your donation directly benefits the vendors. Please buy only from badged vendors.

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[www.groundcovernews.com](http://www.groundcovernews.com)



## GROUNDCOVER NEWS MISSION:

Groundcover News exists to create opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

**Susan Beckett, Publisher**  
[contact@groundcovernews.com](mailto:contact@groundcovernews.com)

**Laurie Lounsbury, Editor**  
[editor@groundcovernews.com](mailto:editor@groundcovernews.com)

### Contributors:

David KE Dodge  
Karen L. Totten  
Christopher Alexander  
Marquise Williams  
Danielle Mack

### Letters to the Editor:

[editor@groundcovernews.com](mailto:editor@groundcovernews.com)

### Story or Photo Submissions:

[submissions@groundcovernews.com](mailto:submissions@groundcovernews.com)

### Ads and Classified Ads

[contact@groundcovernews.com](mailto:contact@groundcovernews.com)

[www.groundcovernews.com](http://www.groundcovernews.com)

Washtenaw County, Michigan



Susan Beckett  
Publisher

## Groundcover gets a home

Stop by and visit us in our new office space, located in room F1 of Bethlehem Church, 432 S. Fourth Ave. The office is staffed from 10:00 am – 2:00

pm M, W, Th, F so vendors can stop in for more newspapers. Training for new vendors is at 10:15 a.m. Thursday. Our next volunteer meeting will be there in mid-January and on Thursday evenings vendors will gather there to share and socialize.

Eventually we hope to own editing software and a high quality computer and lay out the newspaper at the office, too. We

are seeking a variety of computers with basic word processing and internet capabilities so we can offer computer literacy training for our vendors and some of our volunteers, and so that vendors and others can prepare and submit material for publication right there in our office.

Parishioners and staff at Bethlehem have warmly welcomed us and we look forward to pursuing our various missions side by side and together. We are currently selling newspapers on the property of six faith communities and we are reaching out to the rest of Washtenaw County places of worship to ask permission to sell on their property, too.

One of our greatest challenges has been reaching the large percentage of the county population that does not spend much time downtown. Our vending permit only grants us access to public sidewalks and unfortunately, there is not much pedestrian traffic outside of downtown. Selling to the faith community following their services and events is one way we are able to penetrate deeper into the community.

We would like to find others, especially for the winter, when pedestrian traffic everywhere slows considerably. We welcome invitations from shopping areas, entertainment venues and other places where members of the public gather.

## U.S. Senate Robs Peter to Pay Paul

by Susan Beckett

The U.S. Senate recently passed a bill that bolsters childhood nutrition programs. Unfortunately, they elected to pay for the improvements by taking money from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the safety net once known as Food Stamps.

While we applaud improving and extending school feeding programs through the summer, having the child get a free breakfast and lunch only to come home and find the family cannot afford dinner, is hardly helpful. As it is, the maximum daily SNAP benefit is only \$4.50 for a single person. Further, where does that leave the preschoolers and

childless adults who have been laid off, seen their unemployment run out and have not been able to land new jobs?

Fortunately, the House of Representatives has not yet acted on this legislation. They could identify a different source of funding for the Child Nutrition Reauthorization bill and the Senate could agree to it

when the bill goes to a conference committee. Our area representatives have yet to speak out in opposition to raiding SNAP funds.

You can share your opinion on the issue by calling the Congressional Switchboard, toll free, at 1-866-220-0044 and asking for your member of Congress by name.

## OOPS!

**CORRECTIONS:** In last month's article "Harvesting the Grapes of Rights," we failed to mention that both Ramiro Martinez and Melanie Harner were founding partners in the coalition, along with Margaret Harner and Laura Sanders. Ramiro is Laura Sanders' partner and Melanie is Margaret's daughter. Our apologies.

## Face to Face Meetings

by Martha Brunell

A number of us remember when milk was delivered to our back steps and the folks who brought our newspaper rang the doorbell and collected subscription amounts at our front doors on a weekly or monthly basis.

There was a time when there were no drive-up windows at the bank, and someone came out to the pump at the service station to fill our tank, wash our windows, and check under the hood, if we asked.

In all of those scenarios, the people who were providing the service or the product and the people who were re-

ceiving it had a periodic face-to-face encounter. We saw one another and even spoke directly to each other. And on occasion, we may have learned something from one other.

These are just a few examples of how much personal contact has been replaced by developments in technology. There are many, many improvements and possibilities that contemporary technology opens up for us. But, for me, there are moments when I am very aware of what we have given up in technological trade-offs.

We are all wise to be deliberate and intentional now in offsetting the

losses of personal contact that are all around us. *Groundcover* extends one way for us to do that.

There are numerous aspects of *Groundcover* that I support with enthusiasm and joy. One of the most basic of these is that a paper seller and a paper buyer meet one another in the transaction. We can look one another in the eye, greet each other, and perhaps speak our names.

Even briefly, we can give a face to the other's reality that replaces the broad generalities with which we often tend to quickly consider people we regard as different from ourselves.

In whatever small fashion, *Groundcover* contributes to community, conversation, and a sense of shared welfare. And that contribution is worth celebrating.

As busy as our lives may be and as many things as we have on our daily to-do list, I want to invite all of us to pause as we sell or buy the paper and see, really see and acknowledge, the person at the other end of the transaction. We have the chance to cover the ground of Ann Arbor with numerous face-to-face meetings. A chance like that is precious indeed.

Rev. Dr. Martha Brunell Pastor  
Bethlehem United Church of Christ

## D's Time - Let's talk transsexual

by Danielle Mack

Happy Thanksgiving everyone!! I wish I had room for more of a Thanksgiving themed article, but I promise more of a holiday theme next month.

This next section will strive to cover the more "severe" side of the T spectrum. Those of us that fall on this side of things may seem a bit odd. Please, the worst possible thing you could do is to stop thinking of us as human beings. The minute you start thinking of any of us as an "it," you strip us of our humanity and make crimes against us – at least in your mind – more easily justifiable. People, especially from this side of the T spectrum, are at a statistically much higher risk of suicide, feelings of abandonment, and loneliness. Please show these people some love and respect out of human decency; cross dressers/tomboys, transvestites, and transsexuals are humans, too.

### Transvestites

Our next stop on the transgender spectrum is the transvestite. Transvestites can be gay or straight. The most basic definition of a transvestite would be someone who in a sense lives part of their day to day lives as the opposite gender. These people have absolutely no interest in a complete transition to the opposite gender. They are rather happy with their bodies just the way they are. These people just enjoy having a much more varied wardrobe; most are gay, some are straight. One great example of this type of person is a pen pal of mine, Nicci Tristram (stage name). Nicci lives a public life as a female fetish model, and female impersonator. In his private life he is a gay male. When traveling the world visiting various shows, doing videos, even online, for all intents and purposes he is referred to as a she. In fact I have only known Nicci as a she. I have never seen her out of character, so it is difficult for me to even refer to her as a him. There are female transvestites as well. I have personally talked to a few, but don't know their

life styles as well as I know Nicci's.

The pronoun rule in reference to their appearance is the same as the earlier portion of the T spectrum. Refer to them according to how they are presenting at the time. If the person is a guy, and you know them

**"Nicci lives a public life as a female fetish model, and female impersonator. In his private life he is a gay male."**

– D, an Ann Arbor Transsexual

as a guy but they are dressed as a woman, refer to them as "her", or "she". In very rare cases the person may want you to still refer to them as a guy, but like I said that is rare. You are much better off for yourself and those around you to refer the person as a "she", especially if she presents herself very convincingly as a female.

### Transsexuals

Transsexuals are not by definition gay, lesbians, cross dressers/tomboys, or transvestites. We are not men in dresses, or dykes. We are a very unique group of individuals with a very specific birth defect. While still in the womb the sex hormones for the brain and body get a little mixed up and baby boys are born with the brain of a girl, and baby girls are born with the brain of a boy. As we grow and develop many of us struggle with difficulty assimilating into society within the physical gender of our

birth. Some of us are lucky enough to have a little help on at least attempting to fake our mannerisms to reflect those of our physical birth sex, some are not so lucky. For some the difficulty with assimilation is just too difficult and they eventually commit suicide. To put this in perspective for all my non transsexual readers imagine for a moment if you were trapped in the body of the other gender. Men, imagine being forever trapped in the body of a woman and being told all your life that you are a woman and that it is wrong for you to want to be a guy. Women, imagine being stuck in the body of a man and being told that your desires to fix this mistake are sinful and evil. Imagine the pain of being ridiculed and ostracized from family, friends and a majority of society. With all this in mind you now have a decent idea of what it is like to be a transsexual.

All transsexuals would like to at some point have a surgery to make their body match the gender of their brain, and correct this birth defect. Unfortunately the Sexual Reassignment Surgery (SRS – aka, Gender Reassignment Surgery or GRS) only mimics the appearance of the sexual organ. This is a major short coming to some transsexuals and a decision breaker. Some of us want the real thing or nothing, others of us will settle for what is available right now just so we can move on and more easily assimilate our

own bodies into the life roles we know we were meant to fill.

If a friend of yours or someone you know is going through this process and you find them to be rather confusing or hard to understand, step back for a second. Are you trying to relate to them as a man or a woman? You may be, at least subconsciously thinking of them in their birth gender role and expecting them to act according to that preconceived thought pattern. Try thinking of them as the gender they are transitioning into, then things should begin to make a lot more sense to you. Some things just may naturally not make sense either way; that is their personality, and part of who they are.

You also need to bear in mind that transsexuals fall into two main categories based on birth sex, each with their own difficulties and hardships; male-to-female (MTF) and female-to-male (FTM). The sexual orientation of a transsexual is based upon the sex they are becoming, not what they are now. A transsexual woman (MTF) that is attracted to men is straight, not gay. A transsexual man (FTM) that is attracted to women is not a lesbian, he is straight.

Next month I will cover Female to Male and Male to Female transsexuals, both topics are very close and dear to my heart. Please be sure to pick up the next issue of Groundcover next month to see this final definition covered, and have a Happy Thanksgiving.

### GETTING TO KNOW GROUNDCOVER

Coming soon to corners near your favorite stores, restaurants and churches are local people working to establish themselves economically, selling *Groundcover – News and Solutions from the Ground Up*.

This street newspaper, published monthly, contains an eclectic mix of material with a broad range of appeal. It is sold exclusively by members of the greater homeless community.

The newspaper costs \$1 and the seller reaps a net profit of 75 cents on each paper. Certified vendors will be wearing nametags with their name and Groundcover ID number.

When you see a Groundcover vendor, please stop, ask about the paper and its content, and buy one. The paper is about establishing commerce in social interaction as well as route to self-sufficiency.

### Groundcover Vendors Code of Conduct

*While Groundcover News is a nonprofit organization, and newspaper vendors are considered contracted self-employees, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.*

Every vendor reads and signs the code of conduct before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:

- Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$1. I agree not to ask for more than a dollar or solicit donations by any other means.
- I will only sell current issues

of Groundcover News.

- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcover News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.
- I agree to treat all customers, staff, and other vendors, respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover News under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Ground-

cover News but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.

- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover News and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover News.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.
- I understand that Groundcover strives to be a paper that covers topics of homelessness and poverty while providing sources of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.

If you see any Groundcover News vendors not abiding by the code of conduct, please report the activity to: [contact@groundcovernews.com](mailto:contact@groundcovernews.com)



# Vineyard Homeless Ministry sends out tendrils of friendship and camaraderie

"Who are those people with the pizza in Liberty Plaza Park?" That's a question that crosses the minds of many passersby as they stroll the streets around the park on Friday evenings. If they stick around long enough, they find that those people are the volunteers of the Ann Arbor Vineyard Homeless Ministry, whose mission is

"showing God's love to people in practical ways; being a blessing to people," according to ministry co-leader Lisa Aunins. Serving pizza to the homeless community is one way they carry out that mission.

It began more than four years ago at the behest of Vineyard Church pastor Ken Wilson as a way to build relationships and bring a bit of normalcy into the lives of those struggling to make in through the day.

Hanging out with friends and eating pizza on a Friday night is about as normal as it comes. Ministry volunteers scouting the area for a place to hold their gathering found that their intended guests frequented Liberty Plaza Park. With its central location and ample yet cozy size, it served well as a place for all to mingle and share pizza and a prayer.

During those years, the number of people served has grown from the initial 20 or 30 to the hundred or so who now show up. Vineyard Church carools about 10-15 volunteers to the park — with more joining them at Liberty Plaza — who serve pizza, give out bags of food for the weekend, and supply camping gear and clothing, when available through donations. Just as important, volunteers mingle and chat with their park friends, catching up on what's happened since the previous Friday visit.

With so many people in close proximity, tempers occasionally flare but warning that such activity could jeopardize the future of the Friday evening ministry is usually enough to initiate a cool down. It is generally a very congenial group that self-regulates its members. The ministry has served every Friday evening of those four-plus years, in rain, sleet, snow, and heat wave, even with tornado warnings and torrential downpours during Art Fair when they relo-

cated to Island Park.

Respect is shown for the sensibilities of the "church people" as park friends work to keep language clean and participate in a group prayer of thanks. Often, a guest accepts the invitation to lead the group in prayer.

**"I really don't know how old they were. Living on the street ages you fast."**

— Lisa Aunins  
Ministry Co-leader

The park is also cleaner than it has ever been. Volunteers, including those from the general community and other churches, pick up the trash left behind from an evening meal and take it, along with the empty pizza boxes, back to Vineyard for disposal to minimize the impact on local businesses and the city. Neighboring businesses have noticed what goes on at the park and sometimes contribute excess food

they ordered for meetings or parties. Other concerned people bring fruit and hot food. Mr. Pizza is quick to donate pizzas from cancelled orders.

Aunins got started in the ministry four years ago. Her niece approached her to buy some books to support her school funding drive and she selected and read "Same Kind of Different as Me," a nonfiction book about a wealthy art dealer and an ex-cotton picker who meet at a soup kitchen. So moved was she by the story that she felt she needed to work with the marginalized members of society. The next Sunday's church announcements included a request for more volunteers to serve with the newly-created homeless ministry. "Could God be calling any louder?" Aunins mused.

She started by helping cook and serve a community meal, also sponsored by Vineyard Church, which is served at First Baptist Church on alternate Tuesdays. She then signed on to organize Vineyard as host for one week of the rotating men's shelter in the winter. She and other volunteers were so overwhelmed by the experience that they arranged to host a week each subsequent winter at Vineyard. Church members send in a light repast to be enjoyed during the evening along with fruit, granola bars, and muffins for them to take with them when they leave in the

morning. Aunins learned that normalcy is often represented by little things like cottage cheese, something often found at home but never at community meals.

During rotating shelter, the men are generally required to leave a facility by 6:00 am. While at Vineyard, the volunteers allowed them to sleep in on Saturday and then served them a home-cooked breakfast in the morning. During the Olympics, a TV was brought in for viewing and when they hosted during Easter, volunteers decorated eggs and made Easter baskets that were placed by the side of each of the sleeping men.

The ministry also hosts a traditional Thanksgiving dinner. A State Farm agent donates turkeys that are taken home by parishioners for cooking. They are returned on Wednesday evening, along with homemade pies to join the side dishes pre-

check service is provided so guests know their possessions will be safe.

Aunins was originally conflicted about missing Thanksgiving with her own tight-knit family, but as guests jumped up to pitch in with the cleanup, she reflected, "I may not be with MY family, but I'm with MY OTHER family." Many more volunteers seem to feel the same way since dozens of them keep showing up each Thanksgiving to make certain those in challenging circumstances have a traditional meal.

The Super Bowl viewing party is another favorite, replete with homemade chili, salads, snacks and beverages. In 2009, when commercials shown in 3D were all the rage, volunteers amassed a hundred sets of 3D glasses so everyone could fully enjoy the experience.

Aunins and others used to visit some of the



**Above: Vineyard visitors enjoy the Superbowl commercials with their 3D glasses, donated by parishioners.**



**Left: A Thanksgiving meal and a caring hand served by the Vineyard Homeless Ministry**

pared at the church. The 100 - 150 guests, including families who usually don't show up for pizza in the Park, come and go throughout the day, with many lingering to watch the entire football game and enjoy leftovers. A clothing store of sorts is set up for guests. Coats, jackets, sweaters, shoes, hats, scarves, gloves, and outdoor gear are donated by parishioners and a coat

encampments around town, bringing supplies and companionship. She sadly recalls Homer and Reggie who lived behind the west side Kroger's. Both finally got apartments but passed away soon after. "I really don't know how old they were," she said. "Living on the street ages you fast." The friendship of the ministry volunteers makes those years a little softer.



## ‘Triage for the winter’ – Toledo’s Tent City

Triage for the winter is how some volunteers describe Toledo’s Tent City, a weekend long event replete with hot meals, medical and dental services, haircuts, entertainment and winter wear. A thousand volunteers help prepare and run the event and most of Toledo’s thousand currently unhoused people take advantage of at least some of the services offered.

While some 300 volunteers are a few blocks away participating in the “Walk to Make 1 Mile Matter” fundraising walk, other volunteers manage the large numbers of guests registering for the day and lining up for appointments with various clinics. The mobile Dental Clinic is in the highest demand, in part because they will only be able to see about 20 people over the course of the day. Another vehicle offers prostate exams while in a third there are draws blood and disease screening. A prostate exam last year saved the life of 47-year-old David Smith. He found out he had cancer that was still in the early stages, caught just in the nick of time.

In one of the tents guests can get the paperwork and advice they need to start the process of getting birth certificates and official ID’s, instrumental to getting their lives in order. Without proper identification people cannot secure jobs or benefits.

Clothing, shoes, blankets and towels donated by city and suburban residents more than fills an enormous tent whose 40 long tables display folded items and form aisles that, those lucky enough to be admitted, follow past racks of hanging clothes. Anxious people await their turn, watching as the people ahead of them emerge from the exit carrying large, full plastic bags and the long line snakes forward.

Despite their fears, the tables and racks remain well stocked as new donations are unloaded from trucks and prepared for dispensing. The tent closes for the day at 5pm but remains guarded all night.

Each guest is paired with a volunteer guide who helps them register and secure the goods and services they seek. High school sophomore Lindsay Williams and junior Tyler Frederick are two volunteers who learned about Tent City through the community service network. Others are regular weekly volunteers with Food for Thought,

1Matters (an official event sponsor) or other service providers; many get connected through their place of worship’s outreach ministry; and some are former guests who are pleased to now be volunteers.

“So many people have such a stereotype about the unhoused and that has to change,” according to Lindsay. She’s noticed it’s the little things that make the biggest difference to people. One man she hugged told her in a husky voice that it was the first hug he’d had in three years. She and Tyler arrived after school on Friday and helped until 11:00 when their parents insisted they come home, returned at 7:00 am for the full day and night Saturday and will return early Sunday to cook the pancake breakfast and clean up.

One woman they met got her first haircut in two years. She looked at herself in the mirror and her eyes welled up. She’s managed to enroll at the University of Toledo so she can get a decent job to support herself and her baby, and she just got housing, but she has no heat, insulation or blankets. The clothing tent yielded a blanket for her baby and Tyler found another blanket for her.

Though their friends don’t understand why Tyler and Lindsay forego the football playoff and Halloween parties to be at Tent City, Tyler says, “I’d rather be here. It’s something I love. Hope – we like to give people hope. A guest and I played chess for an hour and a half. He taught me more than any teacher, about chess and life. People don’t open up until they’re given a reason.”

Lindsay chimes in with, “Seeing their reaction when you give them the simplest thing, even someone to talk to, is the most wonderful feeling! I just drop Facebook and texting while I’m here. I’d rather focus on this. This level of community is missing in life. Sometimes I don’t even know my neighbors.”

Tyler recalls a woman mentioned she had cold hands and a man wearing a voluminous coat with many pockets



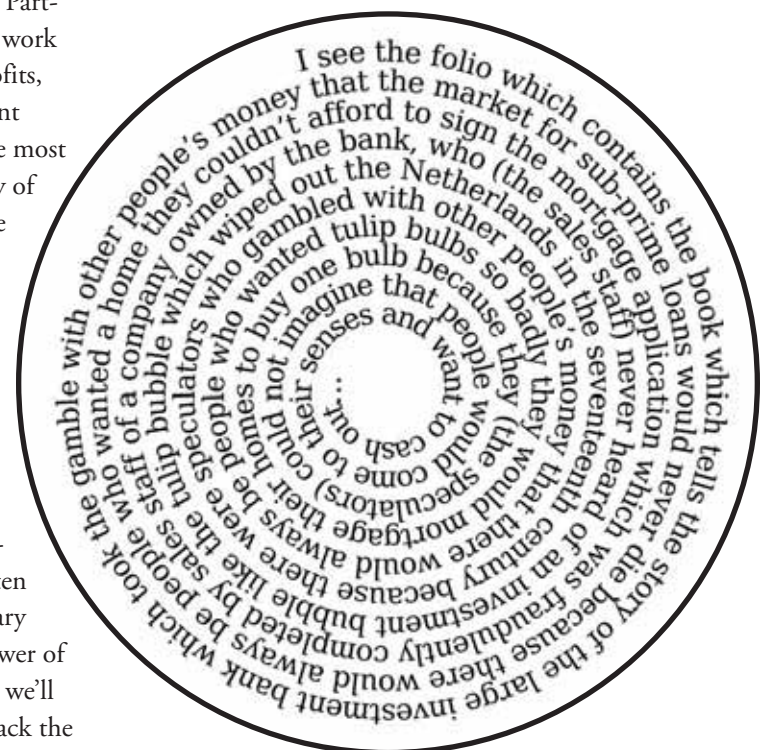
**Above: The mobile dental center has crowds waiting to get in, since this is the only affordable way guests can receive dental care. Other mobile services provide prostate exams and blood screening for diseases.**

**Right: Tent City guests are eager to get into the enormous tent filled with donations from city and urban residents.**

and carrying a small backpack held out a thick pair of gloves to the woman. “I’m homeless so I’ve always got something to give away,” he stated.

Tent City is held in the city park holding the war memorials, which is very fitting since about 20% of the 6,000 people without housing in Toledo at some time each year are vets. The city appreciates the way 1Matters, Cherry Street Mission, Mildred Bayer Clinic for the Homeless, Mercy Health Partners and Toledo Area Ministries work together and with other non-profits, places of worship and government agencies to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. Every Saturday many of these groups offer services on the grounds of the County Library and people gather for breakfast and stay through lunch, talking, playing and dancing together. Guests leave with full hearts and bags of groceries.

After dinner at Tent City comes the entertainment – poetry readings and music. One poem written and read by Tent City Mayor Gary Bond concluded, “When the power of love overtakes the love of power, we’ll light up the darkness and take back the night.” The power of love in Tent City is evident in everyone from the guests to the city police who blend in and participate more than patrol while they visit Tent City.



**“Circularity”  
by David K.E. Dodge**



# Vendor James is earning his way to a better life

When you first see James, he will likely be at the corner of Main and Ann hunched over a sketch pad inking Japanese anime or manga drawings. As he notices foot traffic pick up, he'll carefully put away his supplies and start actively selling Groundcover News. It is fellow artists and people who have had their own hard times in life who most often stop to buy from him, especially once they've talked with him and realize he hasn't yet thrown his life away.

He got started selling Groundcover soon after he arrived in Ann Arbor in mid-July. Prior to that he was searching for jobs in Lansing but got discouraged when prospective employers seemed offended that he was asking for an application. With no alternative, he panhandled to survive.

He finds people are less suspicious when he is selling papers than when he is panhandling.

"Some people treat me like just another



Art work by James

bum begging, some like a vendor doing his job. It makes me feel really wonderful when people acknowledge I'm doing real work. It may not be the best job in the world, but I'm working and I'm proud of that."

"I so enjoy working with James," said Groundcover distributor Sandy. "He's stuck with it and steadily increased his sales. He should be proud!"

"I have this thought when I'm panhandling or selling the paper that people are all thinking, 'Just get a job,' as if they were out there for the taking," James mused. "I have some anxiety issues so I don't interview well, which makes it even more difficult. I basically shoot myself in the foot."

On his own since 17, James noted his job history and the country's economic situation are perfectly in sync, which is not good at the moment. He was raised in poverty with a mother who worked in a bakery and a dad who did carpentry and painting jobs as they came along in rural

New Hampshire. They never had much of anything and James received no allowance so he learned early to work hard, shoveling driveways, raking and mowing.

"Fortunately, we lived in a trailer park back then so there was always plenty of work available for me." When he turned 16 he worked at Arby's and at 17 at breakfast restaurants.

**"Throw your cubs off  
the mountain and raise  
the ones that manage to  
get back up."**

*— Vendor James, describing  
his parents' philosophy on  
rearing children*



Life got harder as his parents' marriage disintegrated into frequent fights and ultimately divorce when James was nine or ten. His schoolwork became erratic with honor roll performances interspersed

with periods of making C's and D's. At 13 he caught a break and got a job with a local farmer watering the greenhouse plants for \$10 a day. But he had trouble getting along with people, especially his family.

His mom remarried and James joined her move to Lansing. Disagreements with his stepfather soon followed and James shuttled back and forth between parents until neither could tolerate him any longer. His interests in anime, techno music and dressing in black led them to believe he was involved in devil worship and on top of that he was rebellious. Tossed from his father's house in New Hampshire, James skipped school for a couple of weeks while he tried to find a place to sleep. The school discovered he was homeless and expelled him.

He then got the best job of his life, working in the kitchen at the Exeter Inn, a four star restaurant and hotel. He started washing dishes but was soon promoted to prep

work then allowed to prepare salads and desserts. With the economic downturn came a layoff and a move to Michigan looking for better opportunity.

He said that his parents subscribed to the 'throw your cubs off the mountain and raise the ones that manage to get back up' philosophy. With a history of dependency for the men on his father's side of the family, he thinks the extended family decided on tough love with him to force him to stand on his own.

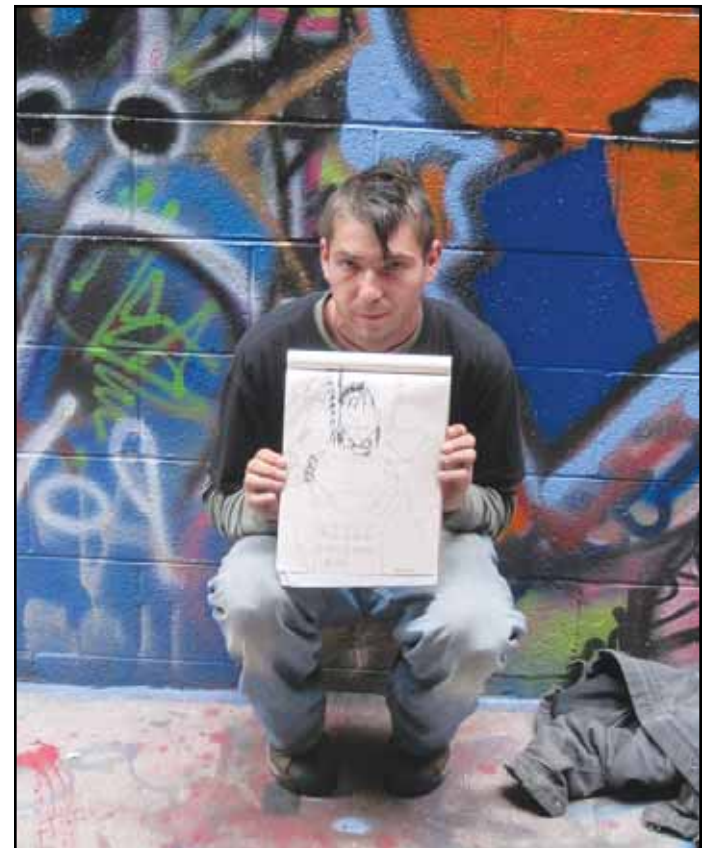
His parents helped him out occasionally, enough to keep him alive and his mother offered him a job once, but it was not on a bus route so he couldn't get there. Due to his family problems, James never learned to drive.

With no job prospects in Lansing, James turned to partying. Having watched the downward spiral of plenty of others, he was careful to avoid addictive substances. Still, his poverty took a toll on him. A genetic predisposition to weak teeth was exacerbated by sugary drinks and a lack of professional dental care, and his teeth deteriorated to the point where they are now too fragile to chew with or brush without crumbling.

As his joblessness continued, he realized he needed an education and profession but did not know how to apply to college. The thought of going to college when he hadn't attended classes in so many years and had never completed high school was intimidating, but he did look into applying while he was in Lansing.

When he arrived in Ann Arbor, James tried to find shelter and advice at the Delonis Center but was denied because he was not a county resident. His girlfriend has been helping him get his life together and offering an occasional alternative to nights in a tent and quick showers at the shelter.

James loves art and is starting a new art portfolio. He's working hard to hold onto it. He has been experimenting with drawing on his own since he was 14 when his



Vendor James, with some of his art work.

interest in Japanese anime and manga led to drawing. He's getting better all the time. He also likes reading and listening to music and he is fascinated by nature and natural systems like weather and geology.

As interested as he is in art, he assesses his odds of a financially successful career as an artist to be roughly equivalent to those of winning the lottery.

"Right now I'm looking for a job as a dishwasher. It's a job I can keep because I'm a fast paced worker and that's what they need," he said.

He reasons potential employers do not hire him to work with food because of the unhygienic appearance of his teeth.

"I want some kind of sensible job, one with job security. That's why I'm going to college," James said. To that end, he's planning to start with basic courses, including one in career planning, and he'll complete his GED during that time.

The next chapter of James' life starts soon when he registers for winter term classes at Washtenaw Community College (WCC).

"Financial aid isn't going to take care of everything. I'm going to need a part-time job so I can afford a place to live. It's going to be hard, and there are some people who'd rather see me fail, but I have to keep going. And I can't get upset if I'm treated unfairly. There are some people who will cheer me on."



## Primal Drumming strikes a communal chord

by Rissa Haynes

You'll hear his soothing beats on the streets of Ann Arbor. While taking a walk toward the Farmer's Market passing The People's Food Coop, many get a little pep in their step from the unique beats of the hand drums of Hassan El-Amin, the instructor, hand drum artist and head facilitator of Primal I Drum Studio. Both young and young-at-heart are inspired and encouraged to share their own rhythms on the set of congos and bongos provided so generously on the streets by Hassan.

Hand drumming is "strong medicine for the mind, body and soul," according to Hassan. He cites hand drumming as having several great benefits for students, healing effects for Alzheimer patients, and stress busting advantages for corporate staff as well as an avenue for family bonding. His personal testimony is that hand drumming "contributed greatly" to the cure of his prostate cancer. To share these benefits, Hassan takes his 25+ years of experience as a studio musician, stage

musician, hand drumming teacher, community wellness drum circle facilitator and his own hand drum instruments to the passersby on "Conga Corner" -- 4th street in front of the People's Food Coop in Ann Arbor.

"There's absolutely no musical experience required to participate," says Hassan of these beneficial sessions provided by Primal I. "Children as young as 20 months have enjoyed Primal I's Edutainment Rhythmic programs... Elders up to 103 years old have enjoyed the Senior drumming circles." After all, "The beat of the drum has been used by every culture around the world..." Even before we were

**"There's absolutely no musical experience required to participate."**

*— Hassan El-Amin  
Primal I Drum Studio*

born, "the steady lub-dub, lub-dub" of our mother's heart beat lulled us to sleep and accompanied our every waking hour. It's no wonder Hassan's hand drumming is

a welcome therapy on the streets of Ann Arbor.

Hassan is a family man. Married with two grown children and the proud grandfather of two young boys, he dreams of inspiring



Hassan El-Amin, teaching children the joy of hand drumming.

his teenage family members into forming a musical group. Hassan's most memorable and exciting times come while hand drumming with groups. For him, the experience with Poncho Sanchez stands out most. Formal musical training came to him by way of the coronet and violin. Although beats and drumming were his passion even in his earlier days, he was never allowed to learn the drums during his school-age years. Hassan prides himself in learning the hand drum art on his own -- his greatest accomplishment.

Learning the art by soaking up methods of many great drummers is a great accomplishment indeed! His freelance skills earned him studio time, stage presence and performances with groups and artists throughout the Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor area at fairs, night clubs, exhibits, corporate offices, schools and libraries. Currently, Hassan El-Amin is a member of Ann Arbor's Classic Rock/R & B Salmagundi band. His passion is to share with everyone the harmony that the hand drums inspire.

### Homeless Inspired Art on Exhibit

**Letters Home: An Art Installation**

**Nov. 26 to Dec. 20**

**9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Sunday**

**St. Francis of Assisi Parish**

**2270 East Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor**

**The exhibit is open to the public**

Get a sense of what it's like to be homeless with this exhibit, which features pieces depicting the state of being homeless in America. Aspects of the exhibit have been gathered, with permission, from homeless persons across the country. The installation is part of a slate of activities which explore the Advent theme "A Journey To Bethlehem."

A reception honoring artists Susan Clinthorne and Sally Thielen will take place 7 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 30 in the St. Francis PAC.



Artists Susan Clinthorne and Sally Thielen, whose work will be on display at the art exhibit held at St. Francis of Assisi in Ann Arbor

## Sudoku ★★★★★ 4puz.com

			6		2	3		
9				3		1		
		7			9		8	5
4								2
			5		6			
1								3
6	3		2			9		
		1		8				4
		8	4		1			

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

## Cryptoquotes

Figure out the encryption code to solve the puzzle

"JO XQO EDCRYCTXVVL WXEAO JYRP X NOQYON DW SQOXR

DMMDQRTCERYON KQYVVYXCRVL AYNSTYNOA XN YCNDVTKVO

MQDKVOBN."

— IDPC J. SXQACQ

## Groundcover Wish List

Locking storage cabinet

4-drawer file cabinet

Computers and equipment

Software like Office Professional and Indesign

Handcarts, rolling coolers or rolling suitcases for newspaper transport

Waterproof bags

Office supplies like receipt books, paper and laminating pouches

Digital cameras, or cell phones with cameras

Volunteer writers, office staff, and social workers

Jobs for hard workers

If you have something to donate, please let us know.

[contact@groundcovernews.com](mailto:contact@groundcovernews.com)

### ACROSS

1. Natty Bumppo (who was never in Iowa City)
8. Burrowing rodent (why are the ones in Minneapolis that peculiar color?)
14. Nigerian politician Rufus and family
15. Denizens of Champaign (they're proud to be belligerent)
16. Feral kitty (it's considered fierce in Evanston)
17. Clinton
18. Norse literature
19. Breakfast fare
21. Bargain
22. \_\_\_\_\_ and outs
24. Marketed
26. Computer program
29. Woodland carnivores (go Blue!)
35. Noun suffix
36. *Rendezvous* with \_\_\_\_\_
37. Muse of Greek myth
38. Nut (where else but Columbus?)
40. Lacedaemonian (he must be lost if he's in East Lansing)
42. Les \_\_\_\_\_, Haiti
43. Phony
44. Sheridan
45. One who peels vegetables (they really live it up in Lincoln!)
48. Aiken
49. *The Iliad* setting
50. Small land mass (abbr.)
52. Whitman
56. Sheep
57. Beds
60. Rope
62. Bloomington inhabitant (what does this name mean, anyway? More hoosy?)
65. Settle the score
66. Radio part
67. Weasel-like creature (often found in Madison)
68. Pennsylvania mountain (are any lions really up there?)

### DOWN

1. Here's \_\_\_\_\_
2. *Petite* \_\_\_\_\_
3. Actress Tuesday
4. Child
5. Cyprus airport
6. Affirmative
7. Superlative suffix

1	2	3	4	5	6	7			8	9	10	11	12	13
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35				36						37				
38			39					40	41					
42							43					44		
45					46	47					48			
				49					50	51				
52	53	54	55		56					57		58	59	
60				61				62	63					64
65								66						
67								68						

8. Titter
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Miss
10. Trudge
11. Employ
12. Papua New Guinea province
13. Cambodian currency
19. River in Spain
20. Top level internet domain
23. Swing slowly
25. Vision
26. Like a certain algebraic expression
27. Bolivian city
28. Interior design
30. City in Japan
31. Abnormal (abbr.)
32. Pertaining to birth
33. Shauna McKenzie
34. Bono
36. Iranian city
39. Family
40. 1965 Ursula Andress flick

41. 1995 Iranian film
43. Island in the Hebrides
46. Kidney adjunct
47. Pig
48. Storage area
51. \_\_\_\_\_ Pilgrim
52. Sheet of concrete
53. Extruding rock
54. Vexed
55. Yuan's successor
58. Fey
59. Fashion designer Tashia
61. Iron \_\_\_\_\_
62. \_\_\_\_\_ Solo
63. Demons of Japanese myth
64. Charles

solutions on page 11



Bethlehem United Church of Christ  
423 S. Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
(between William and Packard)  
[www.bethlehem-ucc.org](http://www.bethlehem-ucc.org) (734) 665-6149

### Sundays:

8:30 am ~ Choir

8:30 am and 10:00 am ~ Worship

9:00 am ~ Confirmation Class

10:00 am ~ Church School

10:00 am ~ Young Adult Forum

11:30 am ~ Youth Fellowship

### Upcoming Events:

November 6 ~ Saturday Worship ~ 5:15 pm

November 12 ~ Bazaar/Bake Sale ~ 10:00 am

November 12 ~ Luncheon ~ 11:30 am to 1:00 pm  
(tickets are \$9.00 ~ open to the public)

November 28 thru December 23 ~ Stories of the Season  
6:30 pm in the Chapel

December 4 ~ Hanging of the Greens ~ 9:00 am

*an invitation to grow in spirit and serve with joy*



## That Ann Arbor Gallery features *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*

On a recent Saturday evening, the Hutzel Building at Liberty and Main featured an exhibition by 30 area artists. All who submitted a work were accepted.

The organizer Thomas William Ulch II, is an instructor at EMU, and many of the pieces were done by Thomas's students, but others were by artists working in diverse areas.

One demanding oil painting of a cityscape imbued with sensual human aspects was done by a man working in the steel industry.

Thomas is a photographer of beautiful places (Florence, Mayan

sacred places, natural beauty, such as Ataco, El Salvador).

He will have a show opening Dec. 4.

The whole effort requires submission of works as well as volunteers to keep the gallery open.

To do either or both, e-mail [thatannarborgallery@gmail.com](mailto:thatannarborgallery@gmail.com) or call 734-276-3549.

That Ann Arbor Gallery is a community arts space. All artists and lovers of art are welcome.

That Ann Arbor Gallery can also be found on Facebook.



Art exhibit organizer Thomas William Ulch II, with an acrylic titled "Soar" and an oil titled "Estrella Sees Red" in the background. (Photo by Phil Hannuksela)

## Book Review

### Heidegger and a Hippo Walk Through those Pearly Gates.

by Karen L. Totten

Woody Allen famously said "It is impossible to experience one's own death objectively and still carry a tune." Yes, it's easy to see how death might make your voice a little flat.



And then there is the old joke about fruitcake, told by Johnny Carson: "There's actually only one fruitcake in the U.S. and it is passed around year after year, from family to family." Hmmm. Perhaps fruitcakes are immortal?

Oodles of funny jokes like these two above and all the good philosophical discussion about death and its related subjects that you might desire are waiting for you in Thomas Cathcart and David Klein's book *Heidegger and a Hippo Walk Through Those Pearly Gates*. ([www.heideggerandahippo.com](http://www.heideggerandahippo.com))

The tome, dedicated to our blithe Mr. Allen and rife with laughs, throws out some of the Big Questions. What is the meaning of life? (is there just one?) Does heaven exist? Do we have souls? Possible answers are presented from philosophers and thinkers as diverse as Shopenhauer to Groucho Marx, Plato to Brenda Lee.

The authors' premise is that philosophy

need not be mind-numbingly obscure. It can, in fact, be derived from and illustrated by some of our favorite laughs.

Consider the story of Ole, recently deceased. His wife went to the papers to place an obituary and she kept it brief. "Just put, 'Ole died,'" she said. The newspaper representative

was aghast—this was her husband, father of her children and grandchildren! Did she not want to say more? He reminded her that the first five words of the obituary were free. The wife considered a moment then replied. "Okay. Put down, 'Ole died. Boat for sale.'"

These humorous forays into the philosophy of death are not simply a laughing matter. Instead, the authors hope to enlighten readers about what they call the Big Delusion, our daily pretense that death is not just around the corner and our many attempts to fend off anxiety about what lies beyond. Death is unknown. Death is final. That scares us, the authors posit. Many Americans like to place it outside the life continuum, even though it is inevitable.

And no subject related to our handling of death is off limits. Take religion. You might have been advised to avoid discussing politics or religion with the family at Great Aunt Mary's house on Thanksgiv-

ing Day, but Cathcart and Klein dive right in. According to the authors, zealous behavior regarding faith has at least one explanation — it is one method we humans use to explain to ourselves our mortality. These explanations quell our anxiety about death and our not knowing when death might occur and where it might lead.

Cathcart and Klein are not by any means advocating dismissing God, heaven or religious belief. In fact, their thoughtful discussions of religion remind me of my favorite Simpsons episode—the one where Bart decides to become a Catholic. His mother and the diehard Presby-Lutheran neighbor, Ned Flanders, spend most of the show trying to convince Bart to choose otherwise, fearing that if Bart goes to Catholic Heaven after death while they go to Lutheran Heaven, they will not see each other in the hereafter.

The final scene of this episode depicts a time some thousand years hence when two Earth armies meet in battle over whether Bart, who has become the Last Prophet, was really about tolerance and love, or understanding and peace. A war of peace versus love — what's up with that?

Both the Simpson piece and the recent Muslim community center controversy in NYC encapsulate the ridiculousness of pitting one faith system against another in an attempt to establish one as superior. Yet humans sometimes do this in while trying to find the "correct" stairway to heaven, Cathcart and Klein point out.

Both men studied at Harvard, where they met, then went out to explore the philosophical world. For Cathcart, this meant working with street gangs and physicians from insurance houses, while Klein wrote for comedians like Flip Wilson and Lily Tomlin. Cathcart, the son of a minister, tried out divinity school while Klein authored several fiction and nonfiction works.

The men are very good friends who decided that jokes have the ability to make a good point while simultaneously defusing tension. And the authors had a personal stake in the subject of this particular book, both having reached as they say, their Biblically allotted threescore and ten. Their own death angst was showing.

Their previous books together include *Plato and a Platypus Walk Into a Bar*, which includes almost everything you want to know about logic and its fallacies, and *Aristotle and an Aardvark Go to Washington*, a hilarious look at political machinations.

Buy or borrow a copy of Heidegger and a Hippo. You'll laugh. You'll think. Besides, you'll want to know how this title joke ends: So, Heidegger and a hippo stroll up to the Pearly Gates and Saint Peter says "Listen, we've only got room for one more today. So whoever of the two of you gives me the best answer to the question 'What is the meaning of life?' gets to come in... Who do you think makes it?

Enjoy!



# A safe PORT in a storm

## AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

by Susan Beckett  
Publisher

"How about a ride to the Delonis Center so you can get some dinner?" an outreach person from Project Outreach Team (PORT) might offer someone struggling to find shelter or food on the streets of Washtenaw County. PORT is the branch of Washtenaw County that focuses on the highest need members of the homeless community, whose circumstance are often compounded by a disability.

Positive engagement is the key to PORT's approach. They commit to meeting the client where he or she is, physically, psychologically and socially. PORT staff frequent underpasses and freeway exit ramps in addition to more formal gathering places like addiction meetings and community meals. At places like the Delonis Center or St. Andrews, they offer addiction and coping meetings along with psychological services on a regularly scheduled basis.

Several years ago PORT organized a soccer team (SSPORT) as a way to engage and empower the homeless in our community. PORT Street Soccer's vision is to use soccer as a tool to provide a healthy social activity for people in the homeless community, with the goal of providing a positive and empowering experience. They went on to compete for the U.S. Cup in June of 2008 and placed fourth out of 12 teams.

"The skills required to survive on the street do not necessarily translate to living in a community with thin walls. Homeless people have had a lot of things done to them and for them. At PORT, we are doing things with people," says John Loring, a senior social worker. "Putting people in housing is not the end of the problem, it is the start. That is why we need affordable supportive housing," Loring continues.

PORT is an intensive community outreach team that consists of two distinct but integrated teams. The Homeless Project Outreach Team (HPORT) serves the homeless mentally ill population in Washtenaw County. Its mission is to engage treat, and stabilize qualifying people who are not involved with the mental health system and then transition them to standard Community Mental Health Services programs. Their vision is to support the highest quality of life achievable for individuals who are



Staff and volunteers at PORT

homeless in our community.

The Justice Project Outreach Team (JPORT) is a diversionary program for individuals who are involved with the justice system and need mental health assistance. The Street Outreach Court works to get individuals with warrants for repeated minor offenses into appropriate treatment programs in lieu of trials with fines, court costs and possible jail time.

The PORT office is on Fourth Ave., not far from the courthouse. About 45-75 people drop in each day for help ranging from finding housing to getting dry clothes. There is a pressing need for sleeping bags, tarps, tents, dry socks and clean underwear.

## And the (Large)beat goes on

by Phil Hannuksela

Mr. Largebeat (a.k.a. Jim Gertz) is in the workshop he made in the basement of Arbor Brewing Company (ABC) for repairing broken fixtures, but also for getting ABC ready for special events, such as last month's Halloween party. The Rockasaurus band played cover rock dance music and also some of Largebeat's, with Jim playing the Theremin. I heard from people who had been rockin' through the whole party that they all had sounded great.



Largebeat prepares Halloween decorations for Arbor Brewing in his basement workshop.

This would be no surprise to anyone who had been downtown on a Friday night in September when Mr. Largebeat's band had the crowd in a raucous boogie that brought the 15th anniversary celebration of ABC's craft beer brewing to its conclusion.

Jim also is animated about getting places faster, and that means trains. About a year and a half ago I found that out after I had disturbed a railroad tie here in town just by stepping on it. The spikes lay there in the gypsum, released by nature unaided. I got onto the topic of rail service, and Jim

see Largebeat, pg. 11

Ten Thousand Villages provides vital, fair income to Third World people by marketing their handicrafts and telling their stories in North America.

Ten Thousand Villages works with artisans who would otherwise be unemployed or underemployed. This income helps pay for food, education, health care and housing.

303 S. Main Street Ann Arbor, MI 48104

734-332-1270

annarbor.tenthousandvillages.com



Join us in supporting local organizations that are vital to those in need

- 8:00 pm, Saturday, Nov. 13th — **PBS radio show, *The Story***, and afterglow at the amphitheater at Rackham Auditorium, UM campus. \$50 to benefit Avalon Housing. Call 663-5858 or visit [Avalonhousing.org](http://Avalonhousing.org)
- 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 18— Wine Tastings, hors d'oeuvres, Schokolod chocolate fountain and live jazz to support the HIV/AIDS Resource Center, Kensington Court Hotel, 610 Hilton Blvd. (off S. State just past Briarwood). \$50 per person in advance or \$60 at the door. Buy tickets by e-mailing: [winecellar@hivaidresource.org](mailto:winecellar@hivaidresource.org), or by contacting Laura Zain at 734-572-9355
- Dec. 1 - 5 — **Rockin for the Hungry**, Volunteers and radio personalities from Ann Arbor's 107.1 will be "freezin' for a reason" at Food Gatherers' largest annual outdoor food and fund drive. Broadcast live from new event location Kroger on South Maple Road, you can participate by dropping off food drive or cash donations, purchasing a ready-made bag of food to donate, or by making a donation at the register.



# Coordinating resources may create funding gaps

by Christopher Alexander

The economic downturn that began more than two years ago has hit Washtenaw County particularly hard. Sharp drops in housing prices translate into lower tax revenues for local government and fewer donations for local nonprofits. Shrinking budgets are causing public and private human services providers to look for innovative approaches to delivering services. Unfortunately, the need for human services funding is increasing at a time when resources are decreasing.

Earlier this year a partnership to fund local nonprofits was formed between the City of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County and the Urban County Board. Urban County is an administrative board that manages federal grant money mainly to fund low income housing. Now, the local United Way and the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation will likely join this partnership. After approval, the new organization will manage roughly \$5.2 million. Once accepted, the two year program would be implemented starting next July.

The new program is being called “Coordinated Funding of Nonprofits” and the most obvious change will be a narrowing of focused services. The organizers have outlined six target areas.:

- Housing and Homelessness
- Food and Nutrition
- Seniors
- Health and Medicine
- Young Children (birth to age 6)
- School Aged Children

In the case of homelessness, for example, the Washtenaw Housing Alliance will review funding guidelines for nonprofits and

make recommendations to the five boards. Food and nutrition programs will be similarly reviewed by Food Gatherers. Food Gatherers and WHA are both local nonprofits themselves. The other four target areas will have comparable oversight boards that will craft recommendations to funding providers.

Another big change will be that participating organizations will have a single application process and a single application deadline. This, it’s hoped, will create a sharp drop in administrative costs associated with funding processes, both for service funders and service providers. Recommendations from review boards are nonbinding and the five boards will all retain their former authority to approve and maintain funding decisions.

The primary advantage to the boards is a focused, cooperative process with less overlap of services. Before funding boards make final decisions, another combined board will review applications and decide if proposals fall in line with targeted outcomes.

Day-to day-administration of Coordinated Funding will be handled by the Office of Community Development. OCD Director Mary Jo Callan has been one of the chief

architects outlining the details of the program. Callan said she believes that involving nonprofits, like WHA and Food Gatherers, is an essential part of their plan.

“The reality is I’m not an expert in all these areas,” Callan said. “I’m not the one providing services and I’m not the service consumer. What we’re trying to do is say, hey look, before we put on paper what we want from nonprofits, like what we’re going to fund, these are the outlines of what we want to achieve. We’ve gotten a

lot of good feedback from the nonprofits over this approach.”

Some area nonprofits are concerned, though, that services outside of the six target areas are going to continue to get overlooked. Chuck Warpe-

hoski, a director at the

Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice (ICPJ), drafted and submitted a letter drawing attention to their concerns over gaps in the plan.

The group’s number one worry is that targeting just six narrow areas will constrain funding of other important work not outlined in the coordinated funding plan.

“While the six priority areas identified for funding cover a broad range of initiatives, they are not exhaustive,” Warpehoski’s letter read. “Where is the funding for literacy, domestic violence treatment and prevention, and services for the disabled? We are

concerned that the proposed consolidated funding mechanism could institutionalize gaps in coverage and exclude needed services from the funding process.”

Vivienne Armentrout is a former County Board member who shares concerns about the mechanics of the new program. Armentrout stresses that she thinks that efficiency and effectiveness aren’t always the same and measuring how well a program works can’t be done with numbers that measure only quantity and ignores quality of services provided. She also says that she wonders how all of the competing interests will resolve disagreements about funding decisions with less money to spread around.

“Under old guidelines that were grandfathered in for the City of Ann Arbor, we received human services funding separate from the housing and other funds that the Urban County Board now receives,” Armentrout said. “So there was a net loss of human services money to the area. This last year Ann Arbor City Council made that up with a special allocation, but I wonder how long they can do that. I suspect that the United Way money is being sought to fill in the gaps.”

Many of the details of coordinated funding are still being worked out. We feel the most significant effort lies ahead. Our mission focuses on homelessness, so we’re concerned how this vulnerable population will be impacted by the forthcoming model.

The community Groundcover works to serve may be strongly impacted by funding restructuring. We’ll continue to try to understand this complicated issue and explain its significance in future articles.



Nonprofits may find themselves fighting over pooled resources

## Puzzle solutions

from page 8

### Cryptoquotes

Solution: "We are continually faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems."

— John W. Gardner

### Largebeat’s on board with music and high speed trains

continued from pg. 10

gave me a DVD of various systems of high-speed in use around the world.

He had assembled moving models of them, even of maglev, which is wheelless and is magnetically lifted above the track. He made presentations to Granholm’s office, Representative Dingell, and even sent a whole set of high-speed models to Obama. Dingell at least listened even

though his staff tried to rush him away. Jim never heard anything from the governor’s office. From the White House he got not even the routine written acknowledgment of receipt.

Largebeat’s efforts don’t end with rebuffs, though. He has shown neighbors his running models in a setting called “Futureville.” There he has not only models of

high-speeds in service now, but a system serving a city that has landing accommodations for vehicles of visitors who have been a lot farther than trains can take anywhere.

This touches on another topic that Jim has followed in detail his whole adult life: the various claims of sightings around the world of extra-terrestrial vehicles, and the

controversies these spawned.

For next year, Jim plans a model maglev. He says he will likely be helping certain neighbors and some of their children assemble their own running models of one or another of these gorgeous machines.

Whether it’s music, trains, UFO’s, or anything else, Mr. Largebeat is very personable, and welcoming of conversation.

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## What People Are Saying

by Phil Hannuksela

Now that the election insanity is over, what is the one thing you think elected officials should do to create jobs in Michigan?



"Today's employers aren't hiring, so workers such as my son are going 60 hrs a week, while others are unemployed. If we could have people working 30 to 40 hours a week, others could get hired. Maybe older people could work part-time."

— Ruth



"Government should increase spending to stimulate innovation, since the private sector is not investing. Infrastructure must be built and education must be better funded and improved."

— John



"The one thing they could do is talk to the heads of the auto industry and find a way to get the plants back up and running."

— Ryann



"It's frustrating to think of it. I worked in IT for ten years and then I was out of a job. I don't think politicians know what they're doing."

— Chris

## Don't talk QUERTY to me

Although I embrace many forms of technology, the cell phone is another matter. An underpowered computer, camera, television and video recorder all crammed into one piece of hardware the size of a folded floppy disc is not a phone.

It is the Mason-Dixon Line between the Y Generation and Granny Clampett.

I like to use a phone for phoning, not writing letters. Texting on a phone is my downfall. I did okay with the early versions when you simply typed a message letter by letter, not unlike using a Selectric typewriter. My next cell phone had "predictive" texting, which involved the phone predicting the words I was typing and spitting them out before I finished. It reminded me of having my kids finish my sentences when they think I've lost my train of thought.

Texting on that phone was particularly frustrating because the punctuation marks were hidden in the phone memory equivalent of the storage closet under the basement stairs where special Christmas ornaments go and are never seen or heard from again.

I therefore decided I simply would avoid texting until better technology came along, just like I ignored that silly cassette tape craze and instead went straight from eight-tracks to CDs. My plan would have worked, but I got a great invitation to a cocktail cruise for Michigan media people. The only catch was that we were asked to text our RSVP.

I asked a friend who is a very competent texter to help me.

"How do I insert a period at the end of a sentence?" I asked. She couldn't figure it out on my phone, since she had long since moved onto a fancy phone made by those clever crisp fruit people.

"Forget about the period, it's texting, it doesn't have to be grammatically correct," she said.

Was she kidding? The one strength I had was the ability to diagram sentences and identify a dangling participle or split infinitive from 30 paces. Sloppy text grammar was unacceptable.

"How do I capitalize a letter other than the first one in a sentence?"

"Capital letters are not necessary," she assured me.

"How do I insert an apostrophe?" She didn't have the answer to this either.

"I HAVE to insert an apostrophe – I'm using the possessive where I'm saying, 'Gil's boat.'"

"Oh for God's sakes, just figure out a way to write the response without using the possessive."

My first stab at the RSVP said, 'Hello fred I look forward to joining you on the boat of gil at m oclock thanks for inviting me best regards lauric acid.'

"How can I make the six a numeral? I push the six button and I get an m."

"Keep pushing the button until it switches to numbers."

I tried this and got the word Noon instead of the number 6. Predictive texting apparently thought lunch time was a perfectly fine time to start a cocktail cruise. And who was I to argue with that logic?

Rather than embarrass myself with a poorly written text message, I skipped the cocktail cruise and lost out on a terrific networking opportunity. But I figured it was better to miss the boat than have Fred and his buddies laughing their heads off at my message: "from which dock will the boat of Gil be departing seen you there at mnoclock thank you landsend"

I've now moved on to an Android phone. It comes with a QUERTY keyboard, which is cool-speak for a normal keyboard. I hope someday technology improves enough that they can make a QUERTY keyboard the size of my old Princess phone so I can actually use the keys.



Laurie Lounsbury  
Editor

## Ann Arbor City Map



27th Annual  
**Alternative Holiday Fair**  
Sunday, December 5  
11 AM - 3 PM

First Baptist Church  
517 E. Washington  
Ann Arbor  
734-663-9376

Free parking  
across the street

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First Baptist Church • Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice

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This is an alternative way of celebrating the holiday season  
by purchasing goods to help others!